(A) *Dewan's reply.*—The remarks and suggestions of Mr. Elliot are evidently well thought out and shall be carefully considered by Government. The recent "Well rules" were sanctioned as an experiment, and shall be modified according to the teachings of experience. It may however here be remarked that the proposed permanent assessment seems neither just nor expedient. The owners of well irrigated lands have no greater claim to have the assessment of these lands declared permanent than other owners of lands which have been improved otherwise than by digging wells. All that may fairly be asked for (and this has already been promised) seems to be that the improvements made by raiyats will not be taken into account in revising the assessment. The principles upon which assessments should be revised on the expiry of the current 30 years' settlement without seriously affecting the value of property are now under the consideration of Government and will be declared ere long.

(B) As to the suggestion that where the raiyats wish the Government should excavate wells for them and charge the cost as an advance to the raiyat, there will be no difficulty in arranging for this though we are under the impression that raiyats would be able to excavate wells more cheaply than Government can do. The Special Assistant Commissioner will be instructed on the point.

(C) The suggestion that Government should excavate wells in unoccupied waste lands and offer the lands to raiyats for cultivation can hardly commend itself to Government. If a raiyat wishes to have well-irrigated land, he has only to apply for the land and for a loan to dig the well and he can have both. If he cannot do this, it is not likely that he will take up land after a well has been excavated in it.

(D) The well rules were applied to three Districts where they were most needed and by way of experiment. But there will be no difficulty in extending them to other Districts also if the people are likely to take advantage of them. Be it remembered that the loans cannot be given to all applicants in one year. All applications will be registered and loans given as funds are available for the purpose.

Note.—For other suggestions regarding the Irrigation Well rules, see subjects Nos., 53 and 280.

Subject No. 2.

Establishment of fuel and fodder reserves in all villages.

Summary of Representation.—Fuel and fodder reserves should be established on lands of all villages wherever land for the purpose can be found. As a grower of grass himself, Mr. Elliot could speak from experience of the enormous advantage that would arise from this in regard to the question of hot weather fodder for cattle. At present when the young grass begins to shoot on the first fall of rain, cattle are at once turned on to it to nibble down every blade as it appears, which

means an enormous decrease in the total production of grass, throughout the season. On the other hand, experience and experiment taught that, if cattle were kept out for a time, the grass would grow to double and treble the quantity available under present arrangements. Where land is available therefore, it should be demarcated and fenced off, and cattle should be scrupulously excluded therefrom till the hot-weather when the general grazing in the village has dried up. The importance of this will be fully exemplified in Dr. Holker's report which is expected to come out shortly. One incidental advantage of this system would be that bushes and trees will grow and cover what is now bare land, and furnish a moderate supply of fuel, which again will go some way towards diminishing the burning of cattle manure which, if not a chemical, is a physical loss to the soil.

Dewan's reply.—The suggestion is good and will be noted. As a matter of fact, the grass on lands, the right of grazing on which is sold annually, is preserved till it has well grown and is sold only then. As to lands which are exclusively set apart as free grazing, it is entirely within the power of village communities to conserve the grass growing thereon. The Deputy Commissioners will however be asked to report whether there are any exceptional tracts where the suggestion can be adopted with advantage.

Subject No. 3.
Advance to laborers.

Summary of Representation.—It is admitted on all hands that the existing law is unsatisfactory, and does not meet the requirements of the employers of labor, various proposals have been made to remedy this, but no satisfactory solution of the question has been reached. After long experience and careful consideration, Mr. Elliot had drawn up the draft of a measure which he would propose, and this he handed over to the Dewan for the consideration of Government. (*Vide* Appendix D.) This draft had been shown to several Planters and experienced officials and others who were capable of forming a sound opinion in regard to the measure, and he had found so universal an agreement in regard to the value of the main principle of the Act that he had no hesitation in recommending it to the notice of Government. Without going into it at length, he limited his statements to saying that whereas the Breach of Contract Act, and also the measure recently pressed on the attention of the Government of India by the Planters of Southern India, were both of an almost purely punitive character, the Act now suggested was mainly of a preventive character and sought by limiting the amount of advances, and registering every advance given, to prevent dishonest coolies from obtaining advances from various Planters throughout the country with a view of defrauding all of them. In other words, the Breach of Contract Act and the proposed Act of the Wynaad Planters enables an employer to punish a dishonest coolie if he can catch him, while the Advances to Laborers